

Subject:
ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S
ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Status: For Publication

Report to: CABINET

Date: 18th June 2008

Report of: HEAD OF REGENERATION

Portfolio

Holder: REGENERATION AND LEISURE

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Members are requested to consider the economic strategy and adopt it as a key Council policy.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:
- Delivering Regeneration Across the Borough

Whilst delivering regeneration is identified as a key priority for the Council in the current Corporate Plan the authority does not currently have a strategy or action plan setting out how it will work to deliver the priority. The lack of any sort of economic strategy was highlighted through the recent CPA inspection. It has also been highlighted as a gap during the development and delivery of other key Council policies. For example recent work on the development of a robust Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework has struggled to provide the necessary evidence base for many of its 'economic-related' policies as a clear and shared vision for the Borough economic role and function is not set out anywhere.

This document aims to rectify this situation. It will provide a clear statement of what the Borough Council is seeking to achieve in economic terms for the Borough and will set out the framework for how we will deliver and, just as importantly, how we will demonstrate that delivery. It will also give us the

mechanism by which we can prioritise actions, programme delivery, secure support, and check progress.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- The Borough continues to be disadvantage in delivering its regeneration agenda by a lack of external resources, primarily because the Borough does not score highly enough with the deprivation indicators. Whilst the Borough has become more adept at finding different ways of delivering against its priorities any strategy must be mindful of our potential to deliver within the current and future resource context. This required us not only to be able to strike the balance between ambition and potential to deliver within the strategy itself but to be able to adequately explain this rationale to partners and stakeholders in order to secure their support.

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 As highlighted earlier in the report Rossendale Borough Council does not currently have an agreed Economic Strategy to provide the framework for its involvement and investment in regeneration activity. With regeneration being recognised as a priority of the Borough Council it is important that this policy gap is filled. Consequently the production of a RBC Economic Strategy was included in the Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing Service business plan for 2007/08.

4.2 The Economic Strategy will provide a framework for action by Rossendale Borough Council, working with its partners, to help in delivering national, regional and local priorities for the sustainable and appropriate growth of economic prosperity in Rossendale Borough. As an agreed strategy that will have the approval of both the Borough Council and the Rossendale Regeneration Board the Strategy will:

- Set the context for prioritising investment
- Have a role in ensuring that national and regional priorities are appropriately interpreted and delivered at a local level.
- Be used to put across local priorities and actions so that they can, where appropriate, influence national and regional policy.
- Be outward as well as inward looking accepting that Rossendale can no longer only look to within its boundaries for the solutions to its longer term economic future.

- Recognise the inter-relationship between economic growth and other key priority areas for improving quality of life for example education, skills, tourism, transport, health and crime.

Finally this strategy will have an important role in communicating the importance of the economy in delivering other agendas in the Borough and the need to account for potential economic impact in every decision that is made.

- 4.3 The timing of the production of this strategy has ensured the best possible strategic fit between the Borough Council's strategy and a range of other crucially important policies and strategies including the refreshed Regional and Lancashire Economic Strategies, the Pennine Lancashire Economic Strategy and the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 4.4 Internal discussions between officers at the Borough Council were undertaken to consider the potential scope of the strategy and members views were sought on which of the options were most appropriate. Members agreed with the recommendation that Option 3 An Economic Strategy – that could focus on those factors that directly impact on the economic performance of the Borough whilst being sufficiently broad to encompass building on the areas economic strengths as well as addressing its weaknesses, was agreed on.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 Whilst not immediately impacting upon Council resources, Members will have to consider the potential impact over the medium term as they implement and promote the Economic Strategy. In particular Members will need to continue to consider and prioritise the allocation of Council resources in line with Corporate Priorities.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 This is an important document in meeting the challenges facing the Borough.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 No Human Resources implications.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The lack of an Economic Strategy has left a major gap within the Borough Council's suite of core policies. The resources and mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that this gap is has now been filled.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 That Members consider the economic strategy and adopt it as a key Council policy.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Consultation of the draft strategy has been carried out within the Council. 1900 businesses and organizations were invited to comment on the strategy during March and April 2008. Relevant responses have been incorporated within the revised strategy, while other comments will be included within the subsequent action plan that will support the delivery of the strategy.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Equality Impact Assessment attached Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached	<i>Attached</i>